

Sketch Your World: The Basics

By Phil Dean

'Sketch Your World' is a collaboration between artist Phil Dean and AccessArt, aimed at helping students 16 and above be inspired by their local landscape.

Set the scene for Sketch Your World by getting familiar with the basics of urban sketching.

In this resource Phil Dean breaks urban sketching down into two parts, helping to build your understanding of how to get the most out of urban sketching, and the practicalities of drawing outdoors.

Part One: Building Your Understanding

Watch the video below to find out how you'll get the most enjoyment out of urban sketching.

Pick a subject that interests you

There's no point in sketching something that doesn't excite you. You're more likely to get a great result with something that interests you. Start with whatever catches your eye – it could be a Coke can or a pinecone!



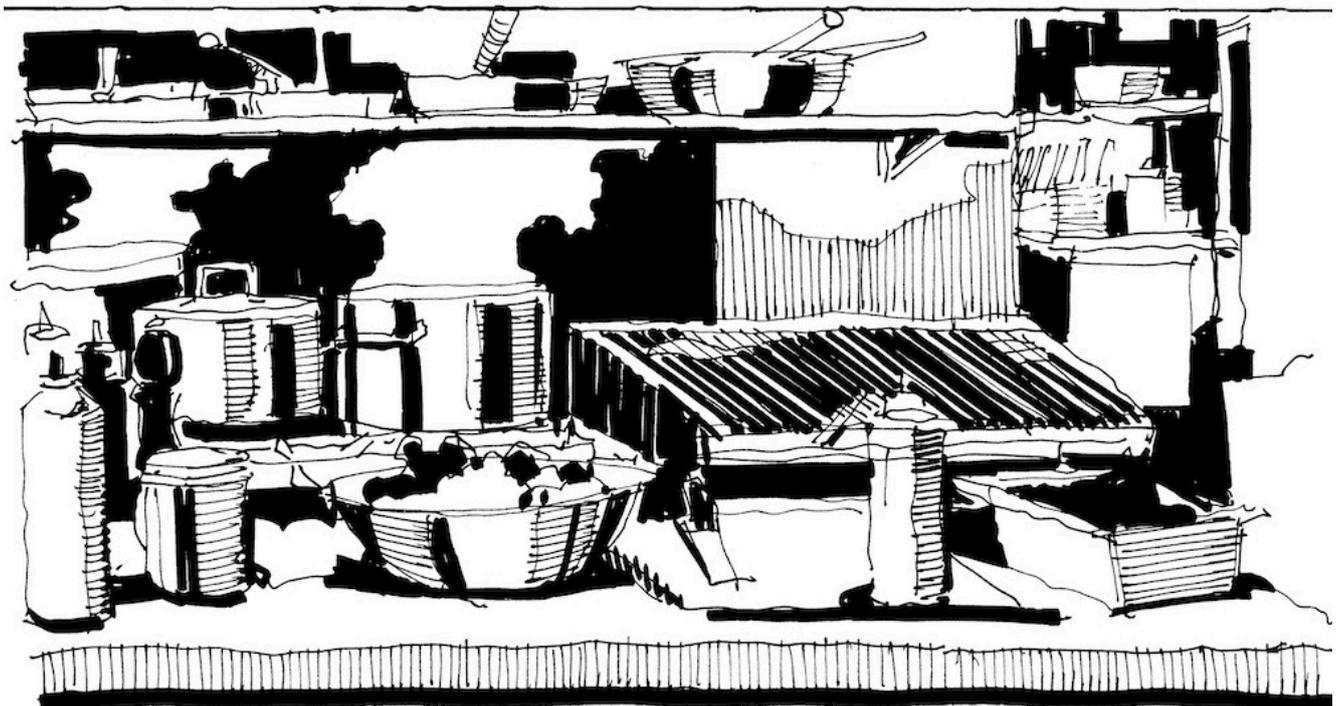
Remember that a drawing is not a photograph

Don't fall into the trap of trying to faithfully capture the scene you are drawing as if it were a photograph. A sketch is an expression of what you're looking at, not an exact reproduction. Keeping this in mind will loosen the shackles of realism and help you be more satisfied with the finished result. Don't get too hung up on the mistakes – learn to celebrate them!



Keep at it

Practise makes perfect, and a sketch a day is a great way to train your eye. Draw what might seem boring things such as bus journeys, sandwich shops, cups on desks and drab buildings. You'll quickly become adept at looking for interesting views, and soon your sketchbook will become a record of your travels.

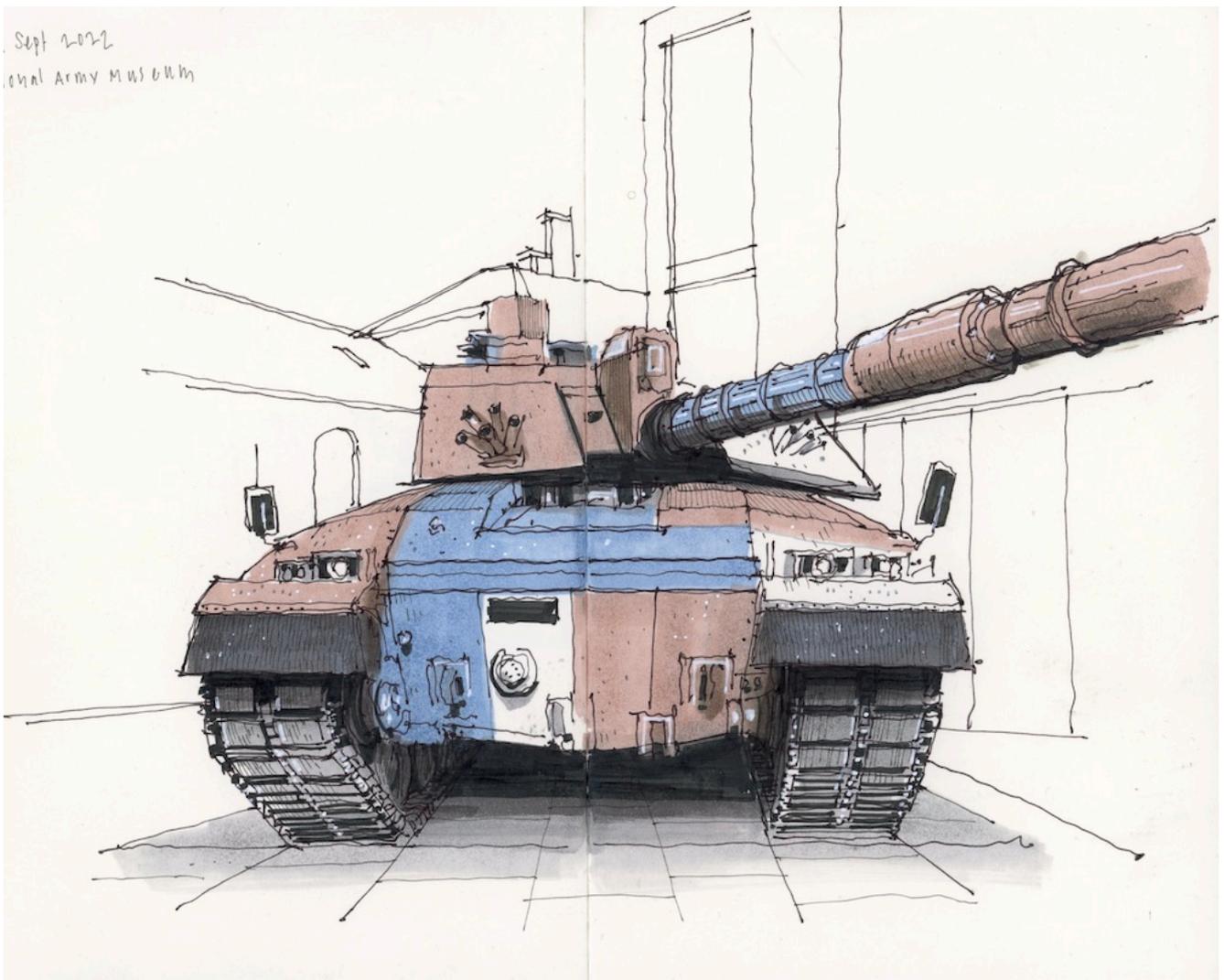


Part Two: Getting Started

Watch the video below for some practical tips for drawing out and about.

Get comfortable

I like standing to draw as it gives me space and the impetus to work quickly, but a seated position may be more comfortable and allow you to take your time. Find a location where you can easily sit on a wall or chair to give yourself more time to capture the scene.



Set yourself a time limit

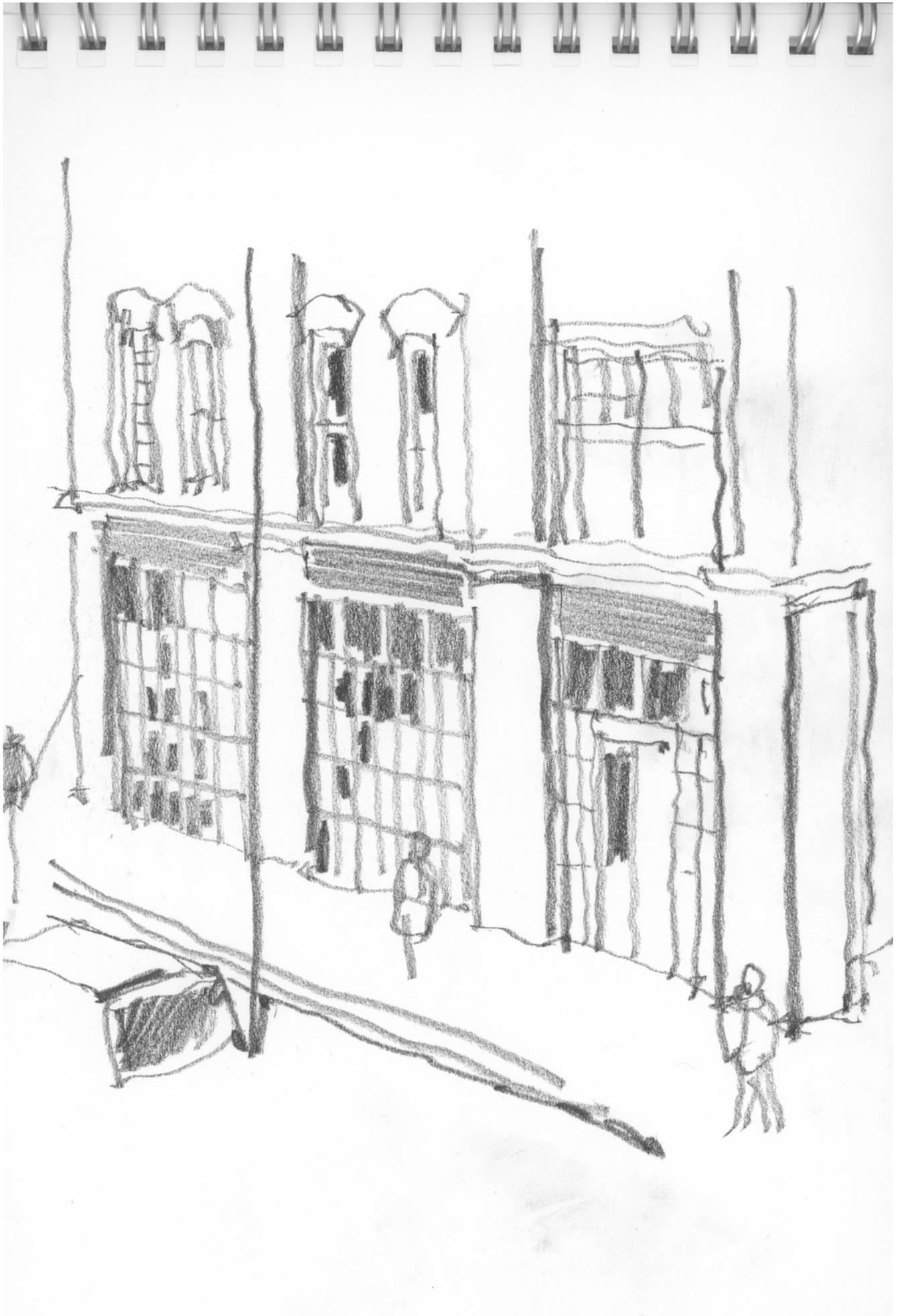
It can be useful to give yourself a time limit on your drawings. This helps to focus the mind and instil your

drawings with energy, and it forces you to move on to another view. Quick sketches often capture much more than an overworked piece.



Work in a medium that you feel comfortable with

I love drawing with pen – straight in, with no pencil. But I'm very aware this requires a lot of confidence and my advice to beginners is always to start with a medium you feel comfortable with. This might well be pencil or charcoal, both of which are quite forgiving.



Stop and come back to it later

Don't be afraid to call time on a sketch even though it's not 'finished'. Remember, you are the one to decide what's finished and what's not. A great tip is to take a quick photo of the view you're sketching on your phone and then use the image as a reference for adding more detail, tone or colour later on.



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